

**Grant Award Number DTPH56-11-G-PHPS13**

**Recipient Organization: Idaho Public Utilities Commission**

**Report Period: April 7 – September 30, 2011**

**Subject: Progress Report**

**Project Title: Idaho Public Utilities Commission State Damage Prevention**

**Submitted by: Ellis Hire, Pipeline Safety Program Manager**

Ms. Annmarie Robertson

U.S. Department of Transportation

Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration

Office of Pipeline Safety, PHP-20

246 E. Laverock Road

Indianapolis, IN 46220

Ms. Alicia Henderson

U.S. Department of Transportation

Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration

Office of Acquisition Services, PHP-30

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, E22-301

Washington, D.C. 20590

### **Specific Objective (s) of the Agreement**

This Project will:

1. Foster support and partnership with stakeholders – Element 2
2. Support public awareness and stakeholder education – Element 5

**Progress Element 2** –Comprehensive Stakeholder Support: The Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC) requested funds to facilitate and organize meetings throughout the state to form local chapter of underground utility coordinating councils (UCC) in 25 of the 44 Idaho counties that presently do not have these councils. Counties currently with established UCC councils meet frequently to discuss construction projects within their communities (with facility owners and other stakeholders) to coordinate activities and prevent damage to underground utilities.

The state got a late start due to timing of the grant award and setting up the grant distribution through the state department of financial management system. Even so, we have worked closely with the Idaho Underground Utility Coordinating Council (IUCC) and established two committees for the purpose of working with the IPUC to create a

presentation to educate stakeholders on forming a UCC within their community, and select and train the presenters.

The purpose of the first IUCC committee is to create a PowerPoint presentation outlining the advantages and benefits of establishing a local underground coordinating council. Seven IUCC committee members are working with the IPUC to create this presentation. The committee participants represent city governments, state government, natural gas operators, power companies and one-call centers. This committee is near completion of the presentation which includes the purpose of a utility coordinating council, benefits, sample bylaws, pictures and other information. The presentation is scheduled to be finalized and approved during the October 2011 IUCC annual meeting in Lewiston, Idaho with buy-in from all involved parties.

The second IUCC committee was established to work with the IPUC in selecting seven primary presenters and four alternates from around the state, again from city governments, state government, natural gas operators, power companies, cable companies, IPUC, and one-call centers. The role of the IPUC/IUCC presenters is to give the finished presentation to a group of attendees at scheduled local area meetings in several counties throughout the state with the purpose of establishing local utility coordinating councils. The presenters will travel to Boise, Idaho to receive training, necessary equipment, establish a meeting and travel schedule for each set of presenters. Presentations will be given throughout the winter months 2011-2012, weather permitting, in order to get the meetings completed if possible prior to the 2012 spring and summer construction season.

Another major accomplishment has been the completion of a data base with stakeholder contact information for each of the communities where meetings will be held. This data base of potential participants will be used to extend invitations to participants to attend the meeting and presentation when it is held in their community. It is very important that as many stakeholders as possible are identified in each community and are invited to the meeting.

**Progress Element 5 – Public Education:** It is the intent of the IPUC, working with the IUCC, to expand our current education program to encompass all of the counties in the state not just the areas of the existing UCC's. We are utilizing different forms of advertising to get the message spread throughout the entire state. TV ads & PSA's, radio spots, print media and the IUCC website will be used to accomplish this objective.

Working with the IUCC, we have selected advertisements for use in getting the “call before you dig” message out. With the late start this year in funding we will be placing some ads this Fall in areas where construction projects are on-going throughout the winter. However, the bulk of the messaging will be done in the spring of 2012 to get the most effective impact for the statewide summer construction season.

A list of news paper, radio and TV stations has been built to ensure that the best “bang for the Buck” is achieved throughout the state with the available funding we have for public education. We will obtain as many free PSA spots and other advertising spots as possible to augment our paid ads. We will be coordinating our educational efforts with those of underground facility owners to prevent duplication and ensure statewide coverage. We will add extra focus on those areas of the state with the most construction activity. Whenever practical we will team-up with various underground facility owners in our educational efforts.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in this very important program. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 208-860-1747 or e-mail: [Ellis.Hire@puc.idaho.gov](mailto:Ellis.Hire@puc.idaho.gov)

Ellis Hire

Idaho PUC

Pipeline Safety Program manager